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ABSTRACT

Perspectives on faculty participation in student advising are offered, along with suggestions for administrators who support or encourage faculty involvement in advising. Stages of the academic career and stages of individual growth in the role of the faculty are noted, based on the literature. The advising role might be viewed as a task less central to the role of faculty and, therefore, a lower-risk activity, compared to teaching activities. In addition, faculty may derive personal benefits from interactions with students. In motivating faculty to participate in advising, emphasis might be placed on its meaningfulness, the accountability of the adviser to helping students, and knowledge of the results of effective advising. Administrators might offer options for participation in advising activities, such as structuring the duties to increase/decrease the level of challenge. For example, an adviser might advise nontraditional students who have special needs. For especially difficult cases, advisers could be provided avenues for referral. Clear criteria for performance (e.g., behavioral cues) could be stated so that the adviser is able to evaluate success. Standardized polls or performance reviews could also be used to provide timely feedback to the adviser. (SW)

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ADVISING: THE PROFESSOR'S VIEW*

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Advising: The Professor's View

No individual is immune from developing excessive satisfaction with the status quo or even attachment to the past at the expense of the present and the future.¹ To what extent do individual faculty need, or would they benefit from, forms of assistance, support, or encouragement to cope with turbulence found in higher education? More specifically, what, if anything, can faculty participation in advising functions provide to the advisor? And, how might consequences of such faculty participation influence faculty productivity?

Productivity, for most faculty, involves the generation of funded research income, the generation and dissemination of knowledge, the organization and delivery of activities designed to facilitate student learning, and various forms of service to, or for, their employing institution. Each institution establishes the climate within which faculty performance will be judged and, ultimately, rewarded. Each faculty member, if they are to act in their own self interest, will assess opportunities, and responsibilities, with at least one eye focused on what mix of effort and dedication will provide the greatest degree of personal attainment and, thus, satisfaction. What this means is that institutional efforts to increase the faculty member's participation, or productivity, in various activities must take into account the availability or value of benefits from the activity for the faculty member.

To be sure, people choose to invest their time and talents in many things for a multitude of reasons, and faculty members are no exception. Yet, if one examines critically the choice by faculty of how they spend their time, one must conclude that in most instances there are some very tangible or, by some other criterion, important benefits to be gained by

the individual. Consequently, invitations and exhortations by the institution to the faculty to expand their efforts in academic advising will generate an implicit, if not explicit, reaction of "what's in it for me?" This is not to suggest that faculty only consider participation in activities where they have some guarantee of personal reward. Faculty generally, engage in many endeavors where altruism and selflessness are the major defining characteristics of such contributions. Is it possible, then, that advising of students may be construed by faculty as providing significant benefits for the advisor? Perhaps, but who are the faculty?

Thoresen² ^{has} suggested^d that the mostly male, mostly white professoriate of our major universities and colleges are confronting the reality of a dream of academic excellence, of infinite wisdom, of power, and of status that has "grown pale and weak with grief." The current situation of reduced student markets, the current state of the economy, and the status of higher education have combined to create a "depressed" environment within many colleges and universities. Gaff³ ^{has} documente^d the frustrations of faculty resulting from the tightest job market in decades, the difficulties older faculty face in job mobility and younger faculty face in obtaining tenure, and a series of drastic budget cuts that have adversely affected departmental programs and faculty morale. To many, the life in academe has lost a good deal of the luster that it was thought to contain. Ironically, the cardinal characteristics of the academic personality (i.e., godlike, ennobled, inscrutable, tragic, and lonely), as valued and positive characteristics of academics are indistinguishable from the common danger signals of midstage alcoholism.⁴ To many, the experience of the "maturing" academic is not always the experience of

growing old with grace, good sense, or dignity.

Issues of Adult Development

For a view of the male college professor within the framework of adult development theory, a definitive work^{provided} has been A by Gould⁵ and Levinson⁶. Newton⁷, a colleague of Levinson's, has outlined a framework of the life structure of the male professor. According to him, the life structure is the overall design of a person's life at a given time, and it evolves over the years. The sequence of age-linked periods alternate between stable, structure-building times and transitional, structure-changing times. The life-structure outlined by Newton corresponds to the five-stages of the academic career, beginning with the first three years of an assistant professor and ending with full professors within five years of retirement, developed by Baldwin and Blackburn.⁸

In a related manner, Ralph⁹ attempted to portray the growth of the individual in the role of the faculty. His five stages of the personality development of the faculty move along a continuum from a highly moralistic view of personality to a psychologically insightful view of personality. According to Ralph, in the first stage the goals and roles of new faculty are defined in accord with the peer group. In stage two, the faculty continue to define their role in relationship to the reference group, but begin to establish increasing distance from members of that group. In stage three, faculty develop an awareness of the possible alternatives in teaching but remain uncertain as to the integration of the available choices. In stage four, faculty have evolved a sense of freedom and relativity in social roles with a compatible style of functioning. Finally, in the fifth stage, faculty can articulate

an educational philosophy that includes a sense of values and character. At this final stage, according to Ralph, the professor accepts diversity, contradiction, ambivalence, and irony while continuing to perform effectively. The reader will no doubt be struck, but not surprised, by the apparent congruence between the stages of faculty development described by Ralph and the dimensions of personality development of college students so elegantly described by Perry.¹⁰

At each stage of their academic careers, faculty face a complex matrix of growing and changing needs and aspirations. How and how long can faculty remain generative in a low-growth economy, increased tempo of living, accelerated rate of change, career-related dilemmas, and tension-producing phenomena? The developmental work of each life-structure transition must be to better connect one's work with one's life. One does this through a reanalysis of one's dream or of the other purposes that led to becoming a professor. This re-examination, however, is not without its stressful consequences. Some of us, in our reflection about our past and our future, experience feelings of being lost or betrayed by one's own dream and feelings of failure and emptiness overwhelm our sense of self and the confidence we believed we had originated. As one might well imagine this is not the kind of ^{environmental} positive ^{press} that leads one to step out into the campus and ask for help. The role of professor has its own sources of stress.

Contributions of Advising

Teaching, for many faculty, remains a solitary activity, education remains an isolated profession, and academe offers little career guidance or support for faculty.¹¹ To some, teaching is risky because it forces them to demonstrate a competency for which they have had no training. As

Atkinson¹² has observed, high need-achievement people prefer intermediate, not high risk ventures. Hence, the likelihood is that faculty will discount the risk in teaching and reinterpret the teaching role, and/or they will put less effort into their teaching activities. Advising, on the other hand, because it may be viewed as a task less central to the role of faculty may be a lower-risk activity. More specifically, advising may be a forum where one may strive and, if successful, enjoy the personal benefits that accrue from such participation. If advising efforts are less^{than} successful,

the professor may be denied certain personal benefits, but does not risk as much damage [as one might in^{non-success in} teaching] to one's perception of personal efficacy and effectiveness.

Might we surmise, that aside from the personal benefits faculty might receive through advising of students, that some faculty actually would enjoy the activity? Bess¹³ asked faculty at six large public universities to indicate their degree of interest, aside from any professional or institutional rewards or recognition, in a variety of educational activities. Four out of ten (44%) indicated a preference for engaging in undergraduate career guidance, 25% a preference for informal interaction with students, and 17% indicated a preference for attending to students with special personal problems. If we conclude that these three activities incorporate at least some of what might be found in the practice of academic advising then one may also conclude that a sizable proportion of faculty presently on campus find satisfaction with certain elements of advising and are already aware that is the case for them.

If advising is perceived, at least initially, as an activity that

may provide benefits for the advisor, what are some of the conditions that might increase the likelihood of participation in such an occurrence? Hackman and Oldham¹⁴ describe intrinsic rewards found in the structure of a job as pleasurable psychological states and note the existence of at least three such states. The first state is the degree to which the individual experiences the work as one which is generally meaningful. That is, is it important? The second state is the degree to which the individual feels personally accountable and responsible for the results of the work he or she does. That is, would these same results occur were it not for me? And the third and last state is the degree to which the individual knows and understands how effectively he or she is doing the job. In other words, how effective am I?

It seems reasonable to expect that advising could be experienced by faculty in a manner where these three states, the meaningfulness of advising, the accountability of the advisor and the knowledge of results of advising could be highlighted. Among advising management options, the advisor might be given a selection or a variety of activity requirements in advising that lead to, or enhance, the probability of experiencing intrinsic rewards.¹⁵ First, the advising activity could be structured so that the advisor could increase or decrease the level of challenge so as to match advisor skills with requirements for action. The common solution here is to provide easy avenues for referral of "tough" cases, so that the advisor can withdraw gracefully from complex and demanding dilemmas. In part, this observation may serve to explain the ubiquitous reluctance that faculty generally voice about being "caught up" in personal counseling situations with students.

Second, it should be relatively easy for the advisor to isolate the advising activity, at least at the perceptual level, from other stimuli that might interfere with involvement. For some, conducting an advising session in conjunction with providing feedback about course performance might complicate rather than simplify the advising messages.

Third, clear criteria for performance should be stated so that the advisor is able to evaluate success at any time. For the professor, this means operationalizing their intent in advising so that behavioral cues may be used to determine success or lack of it.

Fourth, the advising program should incorporate the provision of concrete feedback so the advisor knows the success of meeting the criteria of performance in advising. Standardized polls or performance reviews could be used by the advisor, or the advising manager, to provide timely feedback to the advisor.

Finally, the advising task should offer each professor a broad range of challenges, possibly several qualitatively different ranges of challenge, so that the advisor may, by attempting different challenges, obtain increasingly complex information about different aspects of the self. The advisor may undertake advising different students; for example, female sophomores rather than male freshmen, or students interested in the sciences, or humanities, or "pre-meds", or undertake more sophisticated efforts with the same collection of advisees, as ways of increasing the challenge of advising. When these requirements are satisfied, or to the degree these requirements are met, then we might expect that the intrinsic motivation inherent in advising activity is more likely to be realized.

Increasing Involvement in Advising

The liberation of professors from contemporary academic culture, in this case paying more attention to advising, requires the achievement of three interrelated goals. According to Sanford¹⁶ they are: (1) greater awareness on the part of professors of themselves and what they do, of their philosophies, objectives and styles of teaching; (2) familiarity with alternative ways of attaining their objectives; and (3) recognition of the legitimacy of being interested in students and taking satisfaction from work with them. ^H As faculty entertain seriously the practical benefits, and liabilities, that increased involvement with advising brings they attempt to resolve two issues. First, how does the professor's skills and abilities match the demands and requirements of the job and second, to what degree does the advising environment provide supplies (i.e., support and assistance) to meet the advisor's needs. This consideration of the person-environment congruence is critical to the decision of whether or not to expand involvement. In addition, the decision requires the reinforcement of "significant others", in this case other faculty. Consequential change among faculty depends on their interactions with important figures in their lives, students and administrators, and particularly other faculty members. ^H ¹⁷ Experience suggests that peers and colleagues can effectively help one another to learn, that identification between learners and their "peer teachers" provides support and motivation to learn. Despite the enormous research literature on social influence from the work of psychologists, sociologists, and other behavioral scientists, we still know relatively little about when, how and why social support is effective in helping

people change their actions.¹⁸ It is important, however, that advisors have an opportunity to have systematic discussions with one another about the opportunities available through advising involvement. Institutional efforts to facilitate advisor interaction should be sensitive to at least one caveat. One possible counter-reaction that may easily be triggered by too forceful an orientation, possible shepherding, or direction by the advising coordinator, is that of authority repudiation. This reaction denotes the individual's rejection of supervision, direction, instruction and other forms of interaction perceived by the professor to be inappropriate and unnecessary. Whatever the degree of change in one's professional development or competency in problem-solving acumen, one factor that seldom decreases is the professor's reverie of independence and independent action.

Brickman and colleagues¹⁹ have described a framework of models for helping and coping that may be useful in considering the types of reactions one may find in talking to different professors about what advising may provide for them. By drawing a distinction between attribution or responsibility for a problem, in this case the needs professors may feel for enriching their personal or professional lives, and attribution of responsibility for a solution (i.e., who is to control future events), they derived four general models. Each model specifies what form people's behavior will take when they try either to help others or to help themselves. In the first (called the moral model because of historical usage of the term) persons are held responsible for both problems and solutions and are believed to need only proper motivation. In the compensatory model, people are seen as not responsible for problems, but responsible for solutions, and are believed to need power. In the medical model, individuals are seen as responsible to neither problems nor solutions and are believed to need treatment. Finally, in the enlightenment model, persons are seen as

responsible for problems but are unable or unwilling to provide solutions, and are believed to need discipline.

Irony support for the assertion of the value of advising for the advisor is found in the compensatory model from evidence that help-givers (who assume that they are responsible for solving a problem they did not create) often benefit from helping even when the recipients of that help do not. Bargh and Schul²⁰ have shown that people learn more effectively when they anticipate having to teach someone else and many professors are aware of the phenomena of how much more they learn from preparing a course than from taking one. ^{Consideration of} these models suggest that the advising coordinator needs to be as sensitive to individual differences in style and temperament between advisors as one hopes advisors are of differences between students whom they advise.

An important point to be noted, if only because the professors will certainly do so, concerns the role or importance of advising in the lives of faculty. A professor's primary function is the generation of knowledge and a fine-tuning of one's content speciality. A secondary function is the transmission of knowledge (or teaching) or assisting others to share in one's specialized expertise. Third, and only third, is the collection of other kinds of functions pertinent to the role of professor of which advising is one. ¶ It is a mistake to think for a moment that advising will ever be higher-ranked in the minds of the faculty. To be sure, advising is related to and may contribute a good deal to the professorial functions that occupy first and second place. It is folly, however, to conceptualize advising in such a manner so that the time and expertise required to carry out the activity would suggest a ranking

Thus, planning for advising and for advisors may, within reason, propose ambitious objectives but must not be permitted to propose unrealistic time demands on participating faculty members.

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Of advising proponents, for example, higher than third. Some advocate that the advisor should be a problem-solving specialist, one knowledgeable and skilled in career development counseling, a provider of remediation for study and test-taking skill deficiency, or the user of a variety of diagnostic tests, all in support of efforts to improve the collegiate experience of the advisee. However, well-intended, and regardless of the degree on need, such a labor-intensive view of advising will not be accepted, at least in practice, by the majority of faculty. What is called for, as so often is the case, is a realistic compromise between what the advising coordinator seeks for the institution and what professors seek for themselves.

Implications for Administrators

This discussion makes the point that there usually is an important personal dimension to professional development. Persons faced with transitions in their adult lives often need colleague support and assistance as they contemplate such options. Also, they often need help in reducing their anxieties about whether change in their professional duties will jeopardize their security, their professional status, their chances for advancement, or their self esteem. The goal of an advisor development effort is to instill and support a self-responsibility in which professors would do well out of their own desire to be competent. Some suggest that when teachers are supported and valued for trying new things, for succeeding and for failing, their teaching will be more active. In turn, they will be more likely to provide the setting within which their students will be able to explore, to create, to try, and to err.²¹

Institutional attempts to support and facilitate the professional development of faculty within an advising program must, by necessity, be

broad-based yet thorough. To give one example, holistic professional development, as described by Lindquist,²² involves a social learning program where staff learn from and with one another subjects not found in traditional graduate programs. These include:

1. Adult developmental and learning theories and their implications for staff and student development.
2. The nature of their institution's mission, history, curriculum, teaching, research and committee and administrative practices.
3. The backgrounds, interests, learning styles, learning needs, and situations of local students.
4. Political, economic, and cultural trends relevant to the college's future.
5. Alternative educational practices and research findings throughout postsecondary education.
6. The "press" of the institution and community on staff and students and the supportiveness and challenge surrounding their work.
7. The career prospects for staff and students, and the contacts and preparation needed to get ahead.

Whatever the objectives desired, program elements must be carefully analyzed and understood before program implementation. For example, the conceptual framework buttressing a program intervention must be analyzed for possible gender bias. Until recently, most of the research on adult developmental sequences was conducted with males. Furthermore, another fact that serves to contribute to bias is that most of the full-time faculty in many institutions are male. An unthinking, but potentially disastrous choice, would be to orchestrate a program to include female

faculty, and to use a conceptual base for the program format that was appropriate only for men. Lowenthal,²³ for example, demonstrated that significant differences exist in the perspectives of the life cycle experienced by men and women. Regardless of the conceptual frameworks employed, the advising coordinator needs to remember that a guiding principle for decision³ regarding program content concerns faculty perception of what would be useful, intellectually challenging, and institutionally appropriate.

Advising, in terms of benefits for the advisor, is really a discussion of helping professors with questions such as "why did I become a professor, what is there in this work that is truly dear to me? What youthful illusions about my self and about the academic world have I allowed to obscure my real abilities and possibilities? What can I do well that I care about doing?" There is an old saw in the medical profession that the three most important keys to success are availability, affability and ability - in that order.²⁴ People turn to professional service providers for matters of significant uncertainty, importance, and risk. They need to be confident that they are in good hands. The slogan "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care" is important for administrator and advisor alike.

For the advising administrator, support or encouragement to faculty for advising involvement is advanced as an opportunity for faculty to achieve competence in professionally rewarding functions while receiving significant personally-relevant benefits. For the advisor, increased involvement in advising is one means of attaining, and of helping others to attain, the components of what is meant by a liberal education. The

personal development goals of achieving a sense of identity, becoming autonomous in thought and deed, broadening one's sensitivities and awareness, and developing effective interpersonal relationships and social responsibility are the outcomes envisaged by liberal-arts goal statements. Perhaps, in many institutions, advising may provide a vehicle for both advisee and advisor to progress toward those goals. Professors, like other professional people, should regularly assess what they have achieved professionally, where they are headed, and how these factors match with their personal values and goals. Faculty who plan a career development strategy are more likely to maintain steady professional growth and enjoy the satisfaction of regular career renewal.²⁵ If participation in advising programs can assist faculty in their renewal efforts then time, money and effort contributed to the advising program is a substantive, and long-lasting, investment.

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